- 1699-1999

Ladner, Cuevas among oldest Coas

Ancestry gets new attention

By KEN FINK

THE SUN HERALD

Mattina, Creel, Mavar, Rosetti, Desporte, Swetman. All old Coast families, right?

Well, correct, but certainly not the oldest.

As the Tricentennial puts a focus on the Coast's history, some families can trace their roots and ancestries to the day discoverer Pierre LeMoyne, Sieur d'Iberville, set foot here.

A variety of family names represent the diversity of cultures that have shaped the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

But they all had to start somewhere.

Hancock County historian Charles Gray explains it this way in regard to one of the first true Coastians: "Christian Ladner had 12 children. One daughter married Ron Cuevas. From them, there are 63,000 descendants. Do not pick a fight with a Cuevas or a Ladner unless you can muster an army."

Some of the earliest residents came to the Coast aboard one of Iberville's three ships — Le Marin, La Badin and Francois with names such as Corco, Ladner, LaFontaine and Saucier.

By 1800, there were only about 48 families, or 700 or 800 people living between the Pearl and

Perdido rivers.

"They married each other, they married the Indians," Gray said. "They were all French or Spanish, and they were all Catholic. There were no schools, no churches, no law."

With illiteracy came name changes, many believe. Ladnier changed to Ladner, Sassier to Saucier, Favre to Farve, Morin to Moran. People began spelling their names the way they sound-

Land was as abundant as seafood. But before the railroad and the rise of seafood exports, the Coast's population remained

"Jacques Maturin Ladner was the first justice of the peace in Biloxi even though he couldn't read or write," said Nap Cassi-bry, historian. "He had two sisters. One married Jean Baptiste Fayard, and the other married a Corco. Between the two sisters and brother and their husbands, they owned all the land between Hopkins Avenue and Point

Until 1721, people and supplies had to be unloaded at the barrier islands because the Mississippi Sound was too shallow.

When Iberville's brother Bienville began settling New Orleans, that became a more accessible port.

"From 1721 on, virtually all traffic to the Gulf Coast from Europe stopped," Gray said. "It went to New Orleans. The families that lived here became stagnant."

After the Louisiana Purchase, and just before Mississippi became a state in 1817, the land was opened to settlers. That brought a huge population of Anglo-Saxon Protestants from the middle eastern seaboard with names such as Gray, Huggins, Cole, Evans and McCrae.

Many settled near Pascagoula, but some eventually made their way across the Coast, stopping at the Bay of St. Louis 100 years before it was bridged, then moving around the north of the bay.

What did perhaps the most for the Coast's population was the railroad in 1870.

The railroad did two things for population growth in Biloxi and Bay St. Louis.

First, it created a new way to get seafood to markets across the South and beyond, bringing in more French settlers,

Yugoslavian immigrants and Ital-

Families with names such as Baricev, Sekul, Mavar, Covacevich, Mattina and Desporte settled during the 1800s, many making their living from the shrimping and seafood business.

On the other end of the Coast in Bay St. Louis, New Orleans

M.S GWP Coast Tricentennia! 1699-1999 (1300 Years OFH A Commemorative Publ the SunHerald Feb.

ievas among oldest Coast names

mes the way they sound-

vas as abundant as
But before the railroad
rise of seafood exports,
st's population remained

es Maturin Ladner was justice of the peace in ven though he couldn't write," said Nap Cassiorian. "He had two sise married Jean Baptiste and the other married a Between the two sisters ther and their husbands, ned all the land between a Avenue and Point

.721, people and supplies to unloaded at the barrils because the Mississiph was too shallow.

Iberville's brother to began settling New, that became a more to the port.

1721 on, virtually all the Gulf Coast from stopped," Gray said. "It New Orleans. The familived here became stag-

he Louisiana Purchase, before Mississippi a state in 1817, the land ened to settlers. That t a huge population of axon Protestants from dle eastern seaboard mes such as Gray, Hugole, Evans and McCrae. settled near Pascagoula, ie eventually made their oss the Coast, stopping ay of St. Louis 100 years t was bridged, then movand the north of the bay. did perhaps the most for st's population was the in 1870.

ilroad did two things for ion growth in Biloxi and Louis.

it created a new way to lood to markets across th and beyond, bringing French settlers, Yugoslavian immigrants and Italians

Families with names such as Baricev, Sekul, Mavar, Covacevich, Mattina and Desporte settled during the 1800s, many making their living from the shrimping and seafood business. On the other end of the Coast

On the other end of the Coast in Bay St. Louis, New Orleans

businessmen were then able to take their families to Bay St.

Please see Families, Page 22

MS Gup Coast

Tricentennial

1699-1999

(1300 Years of History)

A Commemorative Publication by
the Sun Herald Feb. 7, 1999

Po 1/2

Families

Continued from Page 21

Louis for the spring and summer, themselves commuting back and forth to New Orleans, making it to Canal Street in about an hour.

The Villeres, deMontluzins, Necaises and Toulmes eventually settled in the Bay. In Ocean Springs, where the first settlement started, families entered the industries of seafood, oranges, charcoal and pecans.

Life was simple and pleasant, and families stayed.

Those who remain are descendants of that era — with names such as Krebs, Catchot, Beaugez, Graveline, Seymour and Bellman.

Ken Fink can be reached at 896-2331 or at KGF@sunherald.infi.net

MS Gup Coast

Tricentennial

1699-1999

(1300 Years of Himbry)

A Commemorative Publication by
the SunHerald Feb. 7, 1999

Pg 2/2